

PRESS RELEASE

January 10, 2025

For More information

Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network
Lisa Doerr
715-557-0384

Judge Dismisses Lawsuit Challenging Local Livestock Ordinance

Wisconsin's largest business group lost its latest attempt to keep towns from passing ordinances for industrial livestock operations that protect citizens' health and property values. In her January 9, 2025 ruling, Judge Angeline Winton dismissed a lawsuit filed by the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) against Polk County's Town of Eureka.

WMC filed the July 2024 lawsuit in the name of a couple with no livestock demanding that Eureka repeal a 2022 ordinance. Under the ordinance, large livestock factories must develop plans that address manure disposal, air pollution, water usage, carcass disposal, biosecurity, fire protection and road damage. Eight towns and three counties have [passed similar ordinances](#).

"WMC's lawsuit against Eureka is part of a three-prong strategy by this industry with one goal - no regulation," said Lisa Doerr, a Polk County farmer who helped develop Eureka's ordinance. "They use lawsuits to intimidate local officials who pass legal ordinances. At the same time, they have a lawsuit [challenging any state authority](#). Finally, their Madison lobbyists are pushing state legislators to ban all local control."

The [Town of Maiden Rock](#) in Western Wisconsin's Pierce County is the latest to pass an ordinance. Western Wisconsin is facing a push by industrial hog and dairy corporations to take over and enlarge smaller operations.

For example, one outside corporation has started working on an 11-acre barn in Pierce County to house 6,500 cows. They plan to spread 80-million gallons of waste on more than 7,500 acres in three counties. The barn is bigger than an Amazon distribution center but there are no requirements for engineering or fire plans. They plan to run an estimated 12,000 truckloads of waste per year but there is no road plan. More than [900 dairy herds nationwide](#) are infected with the H5N1 and [California has declared an emergency](#) but Wisconsin doesn't require biosecurity or mortality plans.

"We know WMC and their lawyers well," Doerr said. "This industry wants free rein to operate outside of any laws. We owe many thanks to local leaders in Eureka and around Wisconsin who are willing to protect us."

Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to preserving the health and economic vitality of rural communities. www.sustainruralwisconsin.org.

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